

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claim 2 without prejudice to or disclaimer of its subject matter. Please AMEND claims 1 and 3-14, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, said apparatus[[,]] comprising:

determination means for determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; and

auto-clear operation mode shifting means for automatically shifting to ~~any one of a~~ predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result of said determination means[[,]]; and

control means for, in response to ~~wherein when~~ said auto-clear operation mode shifting means ~~shifts~~ shifting to the predetermined operation mode, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in ~~is controlled to function~~ a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode ~~after the shift processing of said operation mode shifting means~~ from among the plurality of sheet storage units.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~wherein~~  
~~said apparatus~~ further comprising ~~comprises~~ a user interface including a display device  
commonly used in the respective modes, ~~and~~

wherein when said auto-clear operation ~~mode shifting~~ means shifts to  
the predetermined operation mode, display control is performed to display a window  
corresponding to the operation mode after the shift on the display device in synchronism with the  
control of the sheet processing apparatus.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further  
comprising ~~first~~ setting means for selecting a mode to be shifted to by said auto-clear operation  
~~performing setting of executing shift processing of the operation mode by said operation mode~~  
~~shifting~~ means.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further  
comprising ~~second~~ setting means for performing setting of assigning any one of the plurality of  
operation modes to each of the plurality of sheet storage units.

6. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus  
which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units,  
and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an  
image communication mode, and a printer mode, said method[[,]] comprising:

~~the~~ a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; ~~and~~

~~the~~ a step of automatically shifting to ~~any one of~~ a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step[[,]]; ~~and~~

a step of, in response to ~~wherein when~~ the operation mode is being shifted to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in ~~is controlled to function~~ a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode ~~after the shift processing in the operation mode shifting step~~ from among the plurality of sheet storage units.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, comprising:

~~the~~ a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; ~~and~~

~~the~~ a step of automatically shifting to ~~any one of~~ a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step[[,]]; ~~and~~

~~a step of, in response to wherein when the operation mode is being~~  
shifted to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step, controlling the  
sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in ~~is controlled to function~~ a sheet storage unit  
corresponding to the predetermined operation mode ~~after the shift processing in the operation~~  
~~mode shifting step~~ from among the plurality of sheet storage units.

8. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be  
connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a  
plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image  
communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein said image forming apparatus can discharge a  
sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation mode of  
the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said apparatus  
comprising:

operation mode shifting means for automatically shifting an operation  
mode of a final image formation job to a preset specific operation mode from among the plurality  
of operation modes before a new job is input[[],]; and

~~wherein control means for controlling~~ the sheet processing apparatus is  
~~controlled to execute setting of~~ so as to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the  
preset specific operation mode, in response to ~~along with~~ the shift of the operation mode by said  
operation mode shifting means before the new job is input.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, ~~wherein~~ ~~said apparatus~~ further ~~comprising~~ ~~comprises~~ display control means capable of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes, ~~and~~

wherein when said operation mode shifting means shifts the operation mode, display control is performed to display a display window corresponding to the ~~preset~~ specific operation mode on the display device in synchronism with the control of the sheet processing apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said apparatus comprising:

display control means ~~capable of~~ for displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes[[,]]; and

control means for, ~~wherein~~ when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, ~~setting of~~ controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet ~~is executed~~ in synchronism with display control of said display control means.

11. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein the image forming apparatus can discharge a sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation mode of the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said method comprising:

~~the~~ a step of automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a ~~preset~~ specific operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes before a new job is input; and

~~the~~ a step of controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to ~~execute~~ ~~setting of~~ store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the ~~preset~~ specific operation mode, in response to ~~along with~~ the shift of the operation mode in the operation mode shifting step before the new job is input.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus, which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, wherein the image forming apparatus can discharge a sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation

mode of the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said program of said medium comprising:

~~the~~ a step of automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a preset specific operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes before a new job is input; and

~~the~~ a step of controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in ~~execute setting of~~ a sheet storage unit corresponding to the preset specific operation mode, in response to ~~along with~~ the shift of the operation mode in the operation mode shifting step before the new job is input.

13. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said method comprising:

~~the~~ a step ~~capable~~ of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

~~the~~ a step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, ~~executing setting of~~ controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said program of said medium comprising:

~~the a~~ step ~~capable~~ of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

~~the a~~ step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, ~~executing setting of~~ controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step.